



PRESS RELEASE: 19 February 2018

Historic 1718 Silk Coverlet to celebrate 300th birthday at The Festival of Quilts

The UK's earliest known dated patchwork, the 1718 Silk Coverlet, will celebrate its 300th birthday as guest-of-honour at The Festival of Quilts this August.

The 1718 Silk Coverlet is the most treasured piece of patchwork in The Quilters' Guild Collection. Since joining the Guild's collection in 2000, the historically significant piece has been extensively researched by the British Quilt Study Group, has undergone x-ray analysis to examine its construction, has undergone conservation to help ensure its stability and survival, and has been authentically replicated by members of The Quilters' Guild.

Constructed in mosaic style, the Coverlet features the initials 'E.H' and the date '1718' in a central block, surrounded by blocks containing geometric designs and nature motifs. Prior to the Guild's purchase at auction in 2000, the Coverlet was in the possession of the Brown family of Aldbourne, Wiltshire. No details about the maker, E.H, have ever been discovered.

Anna Baptiste, Events Director for The Festival of Quilts, said: "Quilting has an important heritage and we're hugely excited to be welcoming the 1718 Silk Coverlet to the 2018 Festival. It's the oldest piece we've ever displayed and it's a privilege to be given this wonderful opportunity by The Quilters' Guild to celebrate the origins of patchwork and quilting."

Due to its age and fragility, the iconic piece presents a number of display challenges for the curators of The Festival's Quilt Galleries. The Coverlet will be exhibited in a specially built enclosed gallery - something visitors will not have experienced at the Festival before. The area will have a controlled entrance and exit to ensure optimum viewing for all visitors.

Visitors will also be able to enjoy a unique opportunity to view quilts inspired by the Coverlet in a one-off competition category for 1718 replica quilts. The category comes with a once in a lifetime prize – a private audience with the 1718 Coverlet for the winner and a friend at The Quilters' Guild headquarters in York.

The Festival of Quilts is Europe's largest patchwork and quilting event and takes place at the NEC in Birmingham from 9-12th August 2018. Tickets go on sale on 9th April for Quilters' Guild members and 16th April for non-members. Competition entry forms will be available in early March. Festival highlights include: 30 galleries by leading artists and groups from all over the world; over 750 competition quilts; an extensive workshop programme led by top UK and international tutors; talks, lectures and social events, including an evening with award-winning quilter, author and musician Ricky Tims; and over 300 textile craft suppliers.

ENDS

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Register for a press pass [here](#)

About the Festival of Quilts

The Festival of Quilts is Europe's ultimate quilting destination, featuring extraordinary galleries from international artists and groups, over 750 competition quilts, an extensive programme of talks and workshops, a full social events programme and over 300 exhibitors offering essential supplies. The Festival takes place from 9th-12th August 2018 at the NEC Birmingham (Halls 7, 8 and 9). Opening times are 10am to 5.30pm daily (closes 5pm Sunday).